

# Urban Village Boundary

It would be an understatement to say that maintenance of the single-family character of the Morgan Junction neighborhood is a high community priority. Throughout the neighborhood planning process, this sentiment was expressed again and again.

## Background

Concern for the protection of our single-family neighborhoods began with the City designated Morgan Junction as a Residential Urban Village in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and established preliminary boundaries for the urban village. Among the criteria used in designating urban villages were:

- The area's current zoning, which provides sufficient capacity for future growth and development,
- Location along major transportation routes, including roads and mass transit lines, and
- The ability to achieve residential densities which will support compact living and pedestrian- and transit-friendly environments (for example, 2,000 dwelling units exist or can be accommodated within a 2,000-foot radius of the center of the urban village, Morgan Junction is already zoned to accommodate this residential density),

The urban village designation has implications for both zoning and capital investment by the City,

- **Zoning:** Urban villages have access to zoning options not available to areas outside of village boundaries. Urban village neighborhoods can:
  - Suggest rezones of single-family areas within the urban village boundary to low density multifamily or commercial zones in areas close to principal commercial streets;
  - Allow Residential Small Lot (RSL) zoning, which can include (1) single-family houses on individual small lots, (2) two houses on a one lot, and/or, (3) clusters of small cottages on larger lots;
  - Identify commercial areas within the village boundary where residential development will be emphasized (Neighborhood Commercial/Residential zoning);
  - Designate areas within an urban village as appropriate or inappropriate for moderate-density multifamily zoning (including L3 and L4 zones);
  - Recommend how residential buildings without ground-floor commercial space should be treated in commercial zones within the urban village. The plan can allow such single-purpose residential buildings outright, permit them only under specific conditions, or it can prohibit these buildings in commercial zones altogether,
- **Capital Facilities and Investments:** The Comprehensive Plan has a goal of making capital investments consistent with the urban village strategy by encouraging the City to locate "new community-based capital facilities," including libraries, community centers, and parks in areas that serve urban villages. It also requires the City to provide written justification when proposing to locate major capital facilities outside urban village areas. The City is also directed to "consider providing capital facilities or amenities in urban villages as an incentive to attract both public and private investments to an area" (*Source: City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office*).

The Comprehensive Plan includes goals for the provision of adequate and accessible open space within urban villages. Efforts to acquire open space and develop recreation facilities are directed to give particular attention to serving urban villages, which are in general expected to have the greatest need for additional open space and recreation facilities (*Source: City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office*).

Because the urban village strategy has direct impacts on zoning and new public investment, the, location of the urban village boundary is critical.

## Boundary Issues

There was considerable discussion about changing the urban village boundaries throughout the outreach and visioning processes of Phase I and Phase II. Two broad schools of thought emerged during the discussion:

1. Protect single-family neighborhoods from rezones to multifamily or commercial by excluding them from the urban village,
2. Accept the City's proposed urban village boundary, but add selected areas adjacent to the village so our Neighborhood Plan can make recommendations regarding the future use of these areas.

Each school of thought is described below.

### Remove Single-Family Zones from the Village

A large portion of the community was concerned that, once the urban village was formally established, it would be easier to develop the area inside the village boundary more intensively than outside the village. The messages "protect existing single-family neighborhoods" and "preserve existing single-family housing" were among the most frequently-expressed opinions received throughout the visioning and outreach process, Specific concerns were:

- It will be easier to rezone single-family-zoned properties to multifamily or commercial zones within the urban village boundary than outside it.
- Development standards will be different inside the village boundary, permitting taller, larger, bulkier buildings, with higher residential and commercial densities and with less off-street parking.

These people cited several policies in the Comprehensive Plan and other City memoranda which implied that this was possible.

Many of those concerned about these issues believed that the only strategy guaranteed to protect single-family neighborhoods was to change the urban village boundaries so they include only multifamily- and commercially-zoned areas (chiefly, along California Avenue and Fauntleroy Way),

They argued that such a boundary shift would not significantly alter the development capacity of the Morgan Junction Urban Village because the single-family neighborhoods within the City's

proposed boundary were almost fully built-up; virtually all of the future development capacity lay within the commercial and multifamily zones,

### Selective Expansion of Urban Village Boundaries

The second school of thought believed that areas within urban villages would have priority for City planning, scheduling, and funding of infrastructure and maintenance projects, new community facilities, and the like. If the village boundaries were contracted, the excluded areas would lose these opportunities. This group cited policies in the Comprehensive Plan and other City memoranda to support this argument.

In addition, some members this group were particularly interested in making improvements to the Eddy Street Ravine, most of which lies outside the City's proposed village boundary.

Finally, there was concern about the future disposition of Gatewood Elementary School, should it ever be closed. Because of the size and location of the ravine and school site, it was felt that these areas be added to the village so they could be specifically addressed in our Neighborhood Plan.

### Development of Alternatives

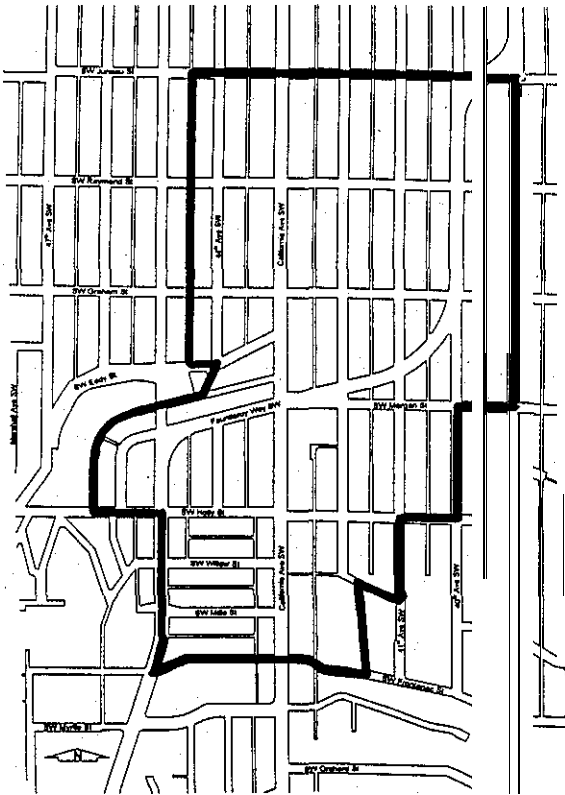
Because an enormous number of potential boundary configurations were possible, the Housing/Land-Use Committee, in consultation with the Administrative Committee, determined that three village boundary alternatives be presented to the public for review and validation:

1. The urban village boundary originally proposed by the City (Map 1),
2. A revised boundary which was the City's proposed boundary, but with three areas added (Map 2):
  - The Eddy Street Ravine and lots between the ravine and the City's proposed boundary,
  - The block containing Gatewood School (bounded by SW Frontenac Street, California Avenue SW, SW Myrtle Street, and Fauntleroy Way SW.
  - A small landscaped triangle at the northeast gateway to the urban village, bounded by Fauntleroy Way, SW Juneau Street, and 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW,
3. A revised boundary which generally corresponded to Map 2, but with three single-family-zoned areas excluded (Map 3):
  - The block faces on either side of 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, from SW Juneau Street to SW Graham Street.
  - Two areas extending along the entire east side of the proposed village, between the City's proposed village boundary and the east boundary of the multifamily- and commercially-zoned areas along California Avenue and Fauntleroy Way.
  - This plan also excluded the landscaped triangle at Fauntleroy Way, Juneau Street, and 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as it would no longer be contiguous to the village boundary.

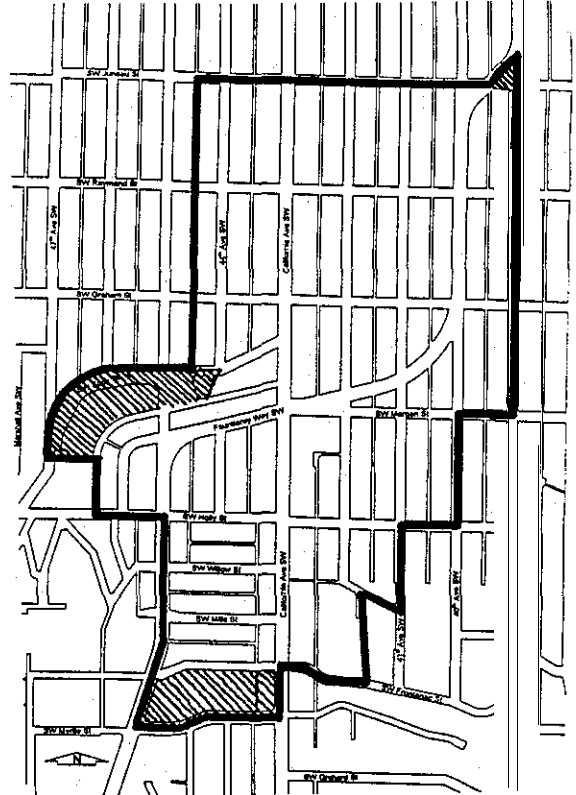
All of the proposals maintain a potential capacity for future development of approximately 300 housing units, based on current zoning and the City's method of measuring development capacity. Also, all of the proposals maintain an urban village shape that is compact, walkable, and centered around the principal intersection of Fauntleroy Way, California Avenue SW, and SW Morgan Street,

## Urban Village Boundary Alternatives Considered and Rejected

## Map 1: City's Proposed Urban Village **Boundary**






### Map 2: Add Gatewood School & Eddy Street Ravine

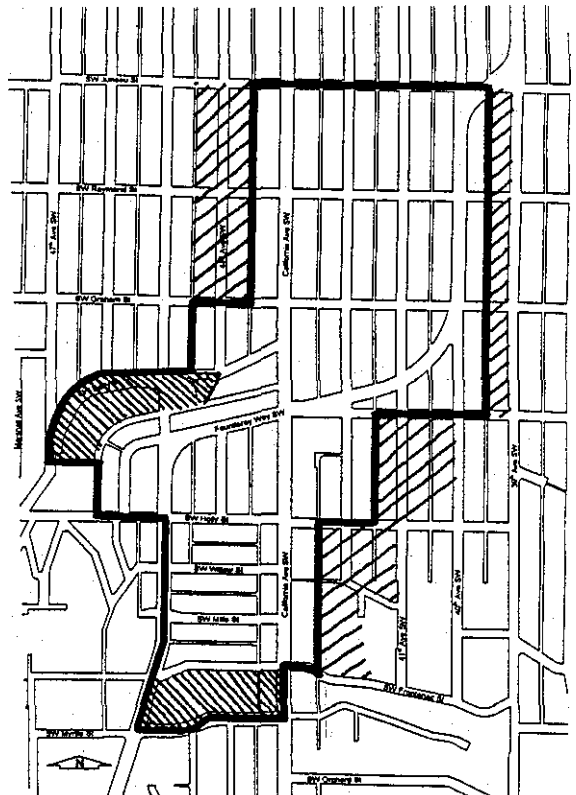


### Map 3: Housing/Land-Use Committee Proposal

### Explanation

*Differences between the City's proposed urban village boundary  
and the boundaries evaluated by the Morgan Planning  
Committee*

-  Proposed urban village boundary  
 Deletions from the urban village proposed by the City  
 Additions to the urban village proposed by the City



## Discussion

The Eddy Street Ravine was included in Maps 2 and 3 because, at approximately 3.8 acres, this undeveloped street right-of-way may represent an opportunity to enhance a large undeveloped area near the heart of the business district without having to purchase property from private owners. Several proposals for the ravine were developed by the Parks and Open Space Committee; these are described in the *Green Crescent Integrated Strategy* and the *Parks and Open Space* element of the Neighborhood Plan.

Gatewood School was included in Maps 2 and 3 because it is the largest single parcel in our neighborhood and it is located immediately adjacent to the City's proposed urban village. While the property is currently operated as an elementary school by Seattle Public Schools, a change in use could possibly occur over the 20-year planning horizon. Former school properties elsewhere in Seattle have been converted or redeveloped into a wide range of uses, including apartments, "condominiums, shopping centers, mixed-use complexes, churches, community centers, and other uses. The Housing/Land-Use Committee believed that it was in the best interest of the neighborhood to include such a large and potentially important property within the urban village so that it could be specifically addressed in our Neighborhood Plan.

The landscaped triangle at Fauntleroy, Juneau, and 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue was included in Map 2 because it is contiguous to the City's urban village, is located at the northeast entrance to the village, and has the potential for creating a formal gateway to the village, especially if combined with a similar, non-landscaped triangle across the intersection of Fauntleroy and Juneau,

The single-family-zoned areas shown in Map 3 were recommended for deletion from the village because their removal would not create a residual village that was still relatively compact and walkable, while not significantly affecting future development capacity. The single-family areas in the southeast portion of the City's proposed urban village are located on a steep hillside and thus are not very walkable.

Other single-family-zoned areas within the City's proposed village boundary were considered for deletion, but were left inside the Map 3 boundary because their removal would have created a radial spoke-shaped village that was neither compact nor walkable. If all single-family zones were deleted from the City's proposed village, the result would have been two discontinuous areas, which also violated the compactness criterion,

## Community Feedback

At the May 16, 1998 Community Check-in, there was no decisive mandate of support for any one boundary alternative.

1. The City's proposed boundary (Map 1) was the least popular of the three alternatives,
2. Alternative Map 3 (the boundaries recommended by the Housing/Land-Use Committee) received the most votes (40%), but did not receive a plurality of votes. It also received fewer votes than the other two alternatives combined (41 %).

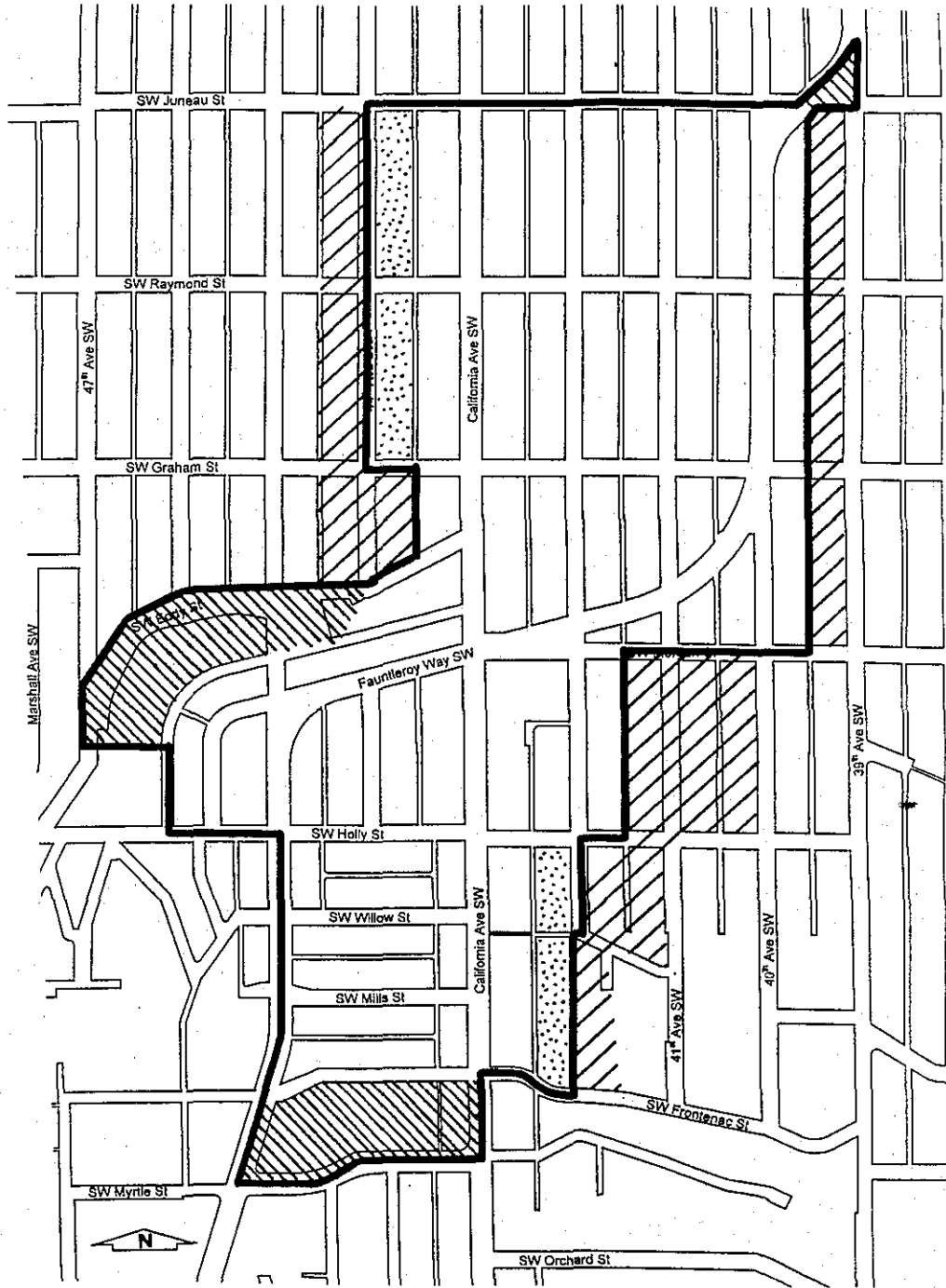
3. There remains a significant number of people who do not want an urban village to be designated at Morgan Junction, or want the urban village downgraded to an anchor. The Administrative Committee rejected these alternatives because:
  - A lengthy analysis would have to be done to challenge the City's designation;
  - The cost of such an analysis would exhaust most, if not all, of the planning budget; and
  - The probability of a successful challenge was considered to be very low,
4. Six percent of respondents recommended other boundaries, but only two submitted maps or verbally described boundaries:
  - One suggested extending the village boundary to the north to encompass the multifamily zones along California and Fauntleroy, as far as SW Brandon Street. A variation of this suggestion was considered by the Housing/Land-Use Committee, but was rejected because of concerns about compactness, talkability, and the encouragement of linear strip development of multifamily housing, creating a "wall" of tall buildings up and down the arterials.
  - The only other suggestion was a non-specific reference to extending the boundary north and west to SW Bruce Street and Puget Sound. Since SW Bruce Street lies outside the planning area, this suggestion was not considered realistic. It violated the compactness criterion, and the suggestion failed to specify the location of the connecting boundaries between the outlying areas and main portion of the village.

### Draft and Recommended Urban Village Boundary





The Housing/Land-Use Committee and its consultant reviewed the results of the May 16, 1998 Check-In, as well as the input received regarding other issues (notably small-lot zoning). The result was a compromise between Maps 2 and 3, which is designed to include properties which are large enough to accommodate cottage housing, *should the community choose to adopt Residential Small Lot zoning in the future*. This compromise boundary is shown on Map 4, with the major differences from Map 3 discussed below.

1. The block faces on the east side of 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, between Juneau Street and Graham Street, would be retained inside the village boundary. This area is the single largest concentration of lots big enough to accommodate cottage housing without assembly of adjacent lots (refer to the discussion of Residential Small Lot zoning in the *Housing/Land-Use* element of this plan). This area could, at some point in the future, provide a transition/buffer zone between the multifamily/commercial area along California and the single-family areas to the west *should the community choose to adopt Residential Small Lot zoning in the future*.
2. The block face immediately east of the large apartments/condominiums on the east side of California, between SW Holly Street and SW Frontenac Street. This area also contains a high proportion of lots large enough for cottage housing, *should the community choose to adopt Residential Small Lot zoning in the future*. View blockage should not be a problem because (1) the height limit for cottages is lower than that for single-family houses and (2) the large multifamily buildings on California already present a view blockage problem.

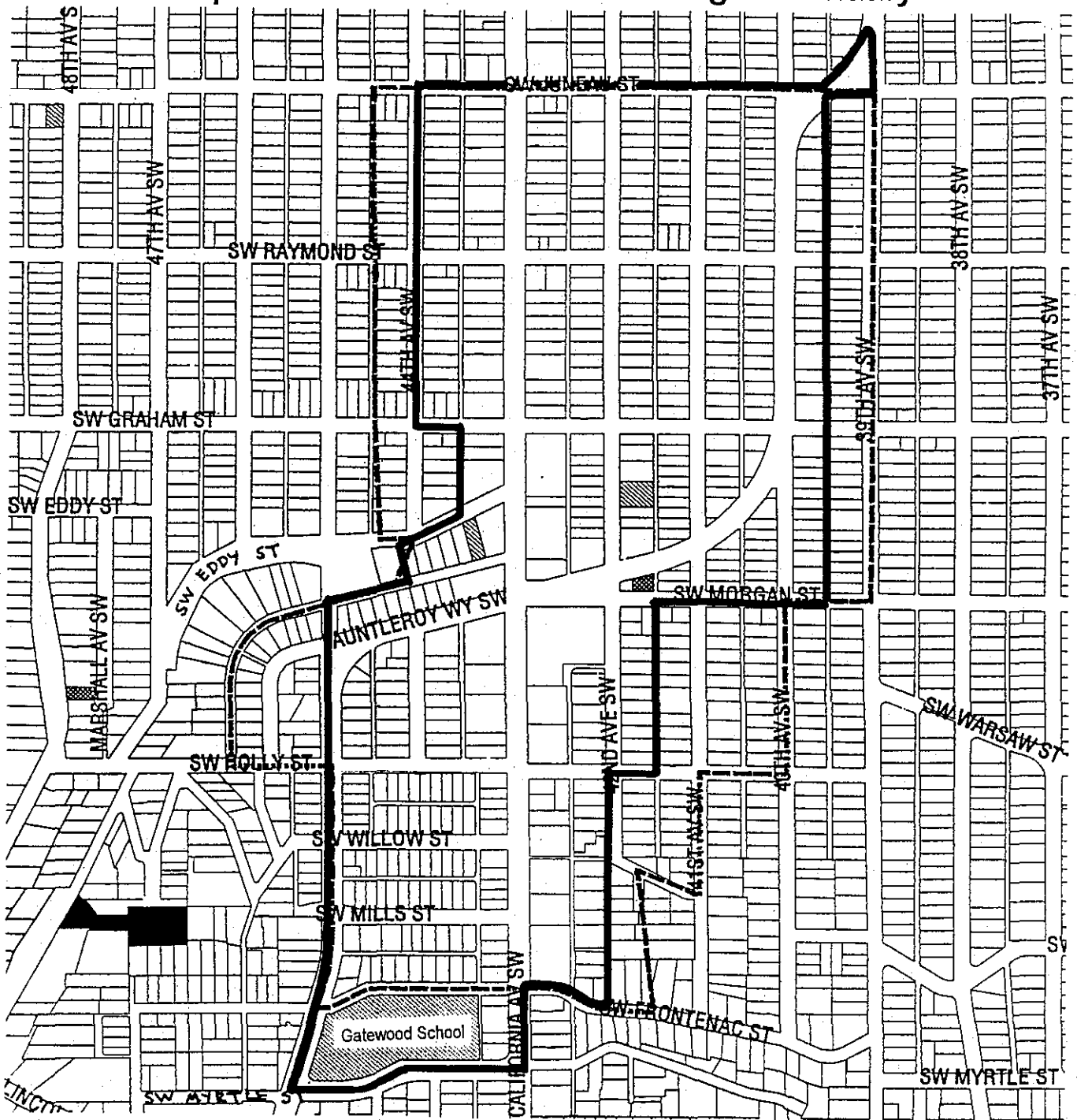
Map 4: Draft Urban Village Boundary Validated During November 1998



### Explanation

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Recommended urban village boundary                  |  | Deletions from the urban village proposed by the City                         |
|  | Additions to the urban village proposed by the City |  | Areas with concentrations of lots large enough to accommodate cottage housing |

# Map 5: Recommended Urban Village Boundary



## Explanation

- |  |  |   |  |                         |
|--|--|---|--|-------------------------|
|  |  | Urban village boundary originally proposed by the City                      |  | City properties         |
|  |  | Urban village boundary recommended in the Morgan Junction Neighborhood Plan |  | Other public properties |
|  |  |   |  | Parks and open space    |



3. Add the triangle park at Fauntleroy, Juneau, and 39<sup>th</sup> for potential inclusion as a “gateway” to the Morgan area. This triangular area touches the northeast corner of the recommended village boundary.

The draft village was considered to be a “compromise” because it:

- Still takes some single-family-zoned areas out of the City’s proposed urban village, especially the hillside areas to the east of the village. The steep hillsides in this area are not very “walkable” and the area is largely built-up already.
- Allows creation of some cottage housing on the fringes of commercially-zoned and multifamily-zoned areas, providing a transition between these zones and the single-family areas to the east and west of the village.
- Maintains the development capacity of the urban village at around 300 units
- The draft boundary incorporated the change recommended by the Graham Street Block Club petition of September 1998. This petition was discussed in the description of Phase II presented above,

The draft village boundary was submitted to the community for approval at the November 21, 1998 validation event. The change was approved by 57 percent of the respondents overall, though support for the boundary was only 35 percent within the urban village and 46 percent on the fringe of the village. In the planning area, however, nearly 77 percent of the respondents approved the change. A review of the comments received about the boundary showed that many of the people who opposed the boundary change also opposed the concept of urban villages in general. Some of the people who signed the Graham Street Block Club petition also voted against the boundary change (even though their petition was accepted) because the flyer that was mailed out to publicize the event did not show the removal of the Graham Street area from the boundary.

A large number of ballots opposed to the boundary change came from residents of the area around the Eddy Street Ravine. After the validation event, a group of these people submitted a petition to the Planning Committee requesting that the west boundary of the village be moved so that it followed the alley immediately west of California Avenue SW from SW Juneau Street to Fauntleroy Way SW, and thence south and west along Fauntleroy to intersect the draft boundary at SW Holly Street

The petition contained 129 signatures from people living within the Planning Area, plus eight from people residing outside the Planning Area. A mapping of the petition signers’ residences showed that they comprised about half of the properties abutting the ravine and about one-third of the properties in the area proposed for deletion from the urban village.

The petitioners felt that removal of the ravine area from the urban village was one way of preserving the ravine in its current state and preventing development of a public trail along the unimproved right-of-way of Eddy Street.

Their issues included:

- Concerns about ecological impacts, including destruction of an existing wetland wildlife habitat,
- Concerns about the stability of the steep slopes in the ravine and the potential physical, financial, and legal impacts on adjoining property owners, as well as public safety concerns related to landslides.
- Security of properties abutting the ravine and the potential for the ravine being a haven for transients, delinquents, drunks, and drug abusers.
- Impacts on privacy and property values.

An analysis of the petition was made using the same criteria applied to the Graham Street Block Club petition submitted in September 1998. A copy of this analysis appears as an attachment to the Plan. After the analysis was completed, the petitioners turned in additional signatures in support of their request. Because of time constraints, these additional signatures were not included in the analysis; they are, however, included as an attachment to this Plan,

In reviewing the petition and the analysis, the Planning Committee became concerned that the petitioners' boundary would leave the business district on the edge of the urban village when; from a planning perspective, it is most desirable to have the business district located near the geographic center of the village which surrounds it. The petitioners' boundary would pass within one-half block of the main intersection of the village (Fauntleroy Way SW and California Avenue SW).

After considerable discussion, the Planning Committee recommended a compromise in which the bulk of the ravine and adjacent properties would be removed from the village boundary, but the westerly boundary of the village would be at least one-half block away from the business district. The petitioners were not completely satisfied with this recommendation, so negotiations were held between representatives of the Planning Committee and the petitioners over final delineation of the boundary. A compromise was agreed to on January 11, 1999; this compromise boundary appears in Map 5 and is the boundary recommended for the Morgan Junction Urban Village in this Neighborhood Plan,

**Community Response:** (the following was written and submitted by the Eddy Street Ravine Preservation Alliance)

*"There was significant opposition to the recommended urban village boundary set out in the Draft Plan. Approximately 186 homeowner stakeholders signed a Petition, which was submitted to MOCA, to change the urban village boundaries. The petition further directed MOCA to establish new boundaries as California Avenue SW and Fauntleroy Avenue SW. In addition to keeping the urban village east and south of these two arterial streets, this boundary change would have excluded the Eddy Street Ravine and adjacent properties.*

*Although opposition to the proposed urban village boundary was raised at a September 1998 public meeting, a petition drive was instituted after learning that another group had succeeded in moving the proposed boundary by petition with approximately 25 signatures.*

*On November 28, 1998, MOCA received a petition with 135 signatures from homeowner stakeholders opposing the MOCA boundaries and requesting the boundary run along California and down Fauntleroy so that urban development would remain in and around the business district junction (where there are already multi-family type units and/or apartments). The group supporting the boundary change continued to gather signatures and on January 17, 1999 provided MOCA an additional 51 signatures supporting the petition to change the urban village boundary.*

*The justification for changing the boundaries was stated in the petition. In summary, Petitioners rationale was that the Eddy Street Ravine is a fragile ecosystem, which should not be redeveloped. The area is also classified as a slide area and any disruption in the toe of the slopes could trigger additional soil erosion and result in landslides. Petitioners were concerned that this ravine not become a haven, as has been the case in many other public green areas, for the homeless and/or drug and alcohol abusers.*

*The logical boundaries for Urban development should be the two major arterial streets, California Avenue SW and Fauntleroy Way SW.*

*It is important to understand the underlying intent of making the boundary these two arterial streets. First, doing so provides a failsafe for any capital improvements proposed by the City of Seattle. For example, pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan, the City must provide written justification when proposing to locate major capital facilities outside an urban village boundary. This written justification will provide the overall community an opportunity for notice of, and participation in, proposed City projects. Second, development, especially multi units/apartments rentals, with attendant parking, dumping, storm/sewer and surface water drainage problems should be steered away from residential areas and fragile ecosystems.*

*On January 9, 1999, MOCA responded to the Petition. The Administrative Committee voted to retain the boundary recommended in the neighborhood plan in the area north of Eddy Street, stating that our request would put California Avenue SW off-center and only one parcel out of 26 had signed our petition. For the record, petitioners had not even started in this area so the fact that there was only one signature is not indicative of community support or opposition to moving the boundary.*

*On January 11, 1999 representatives of Petitioners met with representatives of MOCA and again reiterated that the logical boundary of the urban village should be the two main arterial streets, California Avenue SW and Fauntleroy Avenue SW. Some petitioners had major concerns about parking and illegal dumping in areas adjacent to the SW Eddy Street right-of-way. There is virtually no parking on 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW and 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW on both sides of the Eddy Street right-of-way. Illegal dumping has occurred in these areas and other areas along the Eddy Street right-of-way. Other petitioners expressed absolute opposition to being included within the urban village boundary.*

*MOCA representatives remained firm that the boundary would not be moved to California and Fauntleroy as requested in the Petition. Without waiving any rights and "under protest" representatives of the Petition re-negotiated the MOCA proposed*

*compromise boundary, which removed certain properties from the proposed boundary along the Eddy Street right-of-way, "*

The recommended urban village boundary is described as follows.

The Point of Beginning is at the intersection of Fauntleroy Way SW and 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW (the northeast corner of the urban village). From there, the boundary runs southwesterly along Fauntleroy Way SW to SW Juneau Street; thence west along SW Juneau Street to 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW thence south along 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW to SW Graham Street; thence east along SW Graham Street to the alley between California Avenue SW and 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW; thence south along said alley to SW Eddy Street; thence southwesterly along SW Eddy Street to the lot line separating parcels 762620-0040 and 762620-0045; thence southeasterly along said lot line to SW Beveridge Place; thence southwesterly along SW Beveridge Place to 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW thence southerly along 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW and Fauntleroy Way SW to SW Myrtle Street; thence easterly along SW Myrtle Street to California Avenue SW; thence north along California Avenue SW to SW Frontenac Street; thence easterly along SW Frontenac Street to the alignment of the west margin of 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW (if extended); thence north along said west margin to 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW; thence north along 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW to SW Holly Street; thence east along SW Holly Street to the alley between 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue SW and 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW thence north along said alley to SW Morgan Street; thence east along SW Morgan Street to the alley between 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW and 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW (and Fauntleroy Way); thence north along said alley to SW Juneau Street; thence east along SW Juneau Street to 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW thence north along 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW to the Point of Beginning.

Based on the City's development capacity analysis and map, the 20-year gross development capacity of the Morgan Junction residential urban village is estimated to be approximately 377 households under current zoning, yielding a net development capacity of approximately 302 households. In comparison, the Urban Village originally proposed by the City had a net capacity of approximately 300 households, so the boundary change does not adversely affect the future capacity of Morgan Junction to absorb growth.